

Washington State Department of Transportation
Public Transportation and Rail Division
Office of Transit Mobility

Joint Meeting of Advisory Committee and Grant Technical Work
Group
King County DOT

September 2, 2005
9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Attendees

Wendy Clark-Getzin (Kitsap Transit); Ned Conroy, Karen Richter (PSRC); Kevin Desmond, Peter Heffernan (King County Metro); Lynne Griffith (C-Tran); Mike Harbour (Intercity Transit); Jemae Hoffman, Charlie Shell (City of Seattle); Joyce Olson, Joy Munkers, Jeanette Johnson (Community Transit); Paul Kaftanski (City of Everett); Patricia Levine (Pierce Transit); Dean Lookingbill, Dale Robins (RTC); Susan Meyer (Spokane Transit); Glenn Miles (SRTC); Marty Minkoff, Lisa Wolterink (Sound Transit); Mary Place (City of Yakima); Bill Roach (CTR Task Force); Martha Rose (Island Transit); Rod Thornton (City of Pullman/Pullman Transit); Kim van Eckstrom (City of Redmond); Brad Windler (Ben Franklin Transit); Lon Wyrick (TRPC); Peter Thein (WSTA); Judy Giniger, Janice Hamil, Cathy Silins, Theresa Smith (WSDOT)

Theresa opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and commending them on the fine work that had been done so far. She went on to thank the participants from King County for graciously allowing us to use their meeting space.

Goal of Today's Meeting

Reach consensus and finalize the grant criteria and call for projects.

Discussion: General

Initial committee discussions surrounded questions that arose during the previous meeting. These included:

Q. Will funding cross over the biennium?

A. Capital dollars can cross over the biennium if the Legislature puts the money into a capital fund in the budget. Operating projects cannot cross over a biennium. There is also the potential for funding to be re-appropriated.

Q. Who is eligible for these grants?

A. Cities, counties, and transit agencies are eligible based on the legislation.

Q. Will letters or e-mails of concurrency with regional plans be required from the MPO/RTPO?

A. Yes the committees agreed that documentation of consistency with the plans was important.

Theresa recognized that concerns had been expressed about the limited timeframe for concurrency reviews and letters to be completed for the project proposals. She then directed committee members to review a document that was distributed, titled "PSRC Recommendations". Karen Richter of the PSRC explained to the committee members that this was recommendations that the PSRC had for language within the call for projects that provided a deadline and informational requirements for proposals to seek a plan consistency review from the MPO/RTPO. The committee reviewed the document.

A committee member pointed out that requiring agencies to complete their proposals nearly two weeks in advance of the submittal due date to allow for consistency review might be a difficult timeline for many agencies to meet. Further discussion posed the question of whether the entire application was actually needed to provide the MPO/RTPO with enough information to review the project proposal for consistency with regional plans.

Consensus of the committee was that the language added to the call for projects from the PSRC's recommendations would provide a clear expectation of applicants in seeking a letter of consistency from the MPO/RTPO. It was also agreed that the entire application was not needed to complete the plan consistency review. A project description and the specific information requested by the MPO/RTPO within the call for projects (from the "PSRC Recommendations" document) would be sufficient for seeking a plan consistency review.

Committee members also agreed that if a proposal was submitted by a local government that was not a transit agency the proposal would require a letter of consistency with local transit plans from the local transit agencies.

Further suggestions were made regarding the language of this section including:

- Amend to include multiple modes.
- Clarify language to include transit and MPO/RTPO.
- Pluralize language, specifically the references to "agency" and "plan".
- Make sure we emphasize that projects must be consistent with policies as well as plans.

Commute Trip Reduction support

Bill Roach presented a letter from the CTR Task Force to the Office of Transit Mobility. The letter was supportive of the new Office of Transit Mobility but requested that OTM should prioritize transportation centers when considering criteria for the grant applications. The CTR Task Force adopted

recommendations to develop a “multi-modal centers” program; CTR funding would be prioritized to funding centers and the Task Force would encourage other agencies to prioritize centers funding as well.

Committee members discussed the CTR program goals and whether the criteria developed for the Regional Mobility Grant Program were supportive of these goals. One issue raised during the discussions was that the CTR program’s change to a “centers” approach has not been formally adopted pending the CTR redesign. Committee members agreed that in the future OTM and CTR should work together on system integration.

Discussion: Grant Report

A committee member stated that the Grant Report Form was not adequately designed to allow applicants to provide the information requested in the space given. Janice Hamil suggested that the initial grant report form could be expanded to a two page design to allow more space for responses and the quarterly reports could remain as a single page that focused only on the information needed on a quarterly basis. The committee agreed to this approach.

Discussion: Framework for Project Evaluation

The committee discussed the weighting of the different criterion based on Option B. Individual members offered numerous suggestions on the weight of each criterion because of its importance.

There was an extended discussion on using “Impact on Congested Corridors”. However, it is mentioned specifically in the legislation, so it must stay in as a criterion. A committee member felt very strongly that this should not be a high scoring criterion and that it would make it difficult for smaller areas to get grants. Although the committee would like to see some geographic equity, the legislation doesn’t require the program have geographic equity.

Do we want to ask for a “return on investment”-type of financial statement?

Amend documents to include specific measurements of improvement such as “percent of improvement” or “person delay”.

A member suggested that integration/partnership (or something that shows we can “play nice together”) should score higher.

Another member pointed out the benefit/sustainability may have more weight in the current political climate.

In the end the committee reached the consensus that all the criteria were important so sections II and III could be removed, since each criterion would be rated high, medium, or low, this would be the best way of sorting the proposals.

Other Issues

Committee members expressed concern that the program might receive a large number of small scale project proposals that would make it difficult to present good projects to the Legislature. There was also concern that there could be a redistribution of funds that would reduce the amount available to the program. However, it was agreed that the discussion of how to respond if there was a reduction in funds would need to wait until things were clearer. In the meantime, the program needs to demonstrate its value to the Legislature.

Wrap-up

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

The grant workshops for potential applicants will be held Tuesday September 20th and Tuesday October 11th. Committee members wishing to assist at the workshops should contact WSDOT staff.